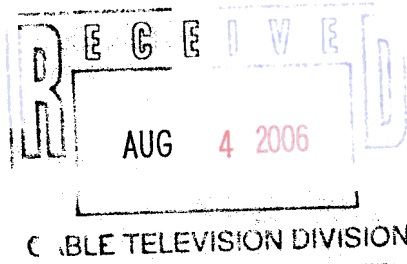


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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1020

REPRESENTATIVE ALICE K. WOLF
Representing the People of Cambridge

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Vice Chair, Committee on Municipalities &
Regional Government

Member, Committee on Education
Member, Committee on House Ways & Means

August 14, 2006

Alicia Matthews
Director, Cable Division
Department of Telecommunication and Energy
One South Station
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Ms. Matthews,

I have recently been made aware of Verizon's intentions to shorten the licensing process for cable franchising to 90 days via its March 16, 2006 petition to commence rulemaking filed with the Cable Division of the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. I am writing today in opposition of this petition; I view this petition to be unreasonable.

I oppose this petition which would put into action a glaringly short timeline for important licensing decisions, and would potentially hurt low income communities and public, educational and government access (PEG) television.

The changes proposed by Verizon would force municipalities to base their assessment of a franchise candidate's qualifications on very limited information, offered on an uncomfortably tight timeline. Furthermore, it appears to keep a municipality from taking what transpires during negotiations into consideration when assessing a franchise applicant.

Also, this petition has the potential to allow companies to leave certain areas. Effectively, this loss of community control could allow cable providers who are currently in place to escape their contracts, enter into a national franchise, and end service in unprofitable areas. This would not only lead to a rise in rates in areas that are not served by the phone company, but also to an inability to ensure that residents in low income communities have access to cable television.

Verizon's petition may erode the agreement previously offered by cable companies to include provisions which require the company to ensure every resident has access to cable services, as well as requiring certain levels of PEG television. Additionally, funding for this important programming would inevitably suffer due to the loss of franchise fees which currently fund PEG television.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Alice K. Wolf
State Representative